

The Denmark Regional Series: Vejle, Skanderborg, Århus

Class Handout: Intermediate

7 August 2021

Geography

During the last ice age most of Denmark was buried under a thick sheet of ice. The western border of this ice sheet ran north and south about 15-30 miles West of Jutland's eastern coast. The parts of Denmark that are east of this line and were under the ice sheet have 5% clay in the soil while the western parts that were not submerged in ice have sandy soils. The clay soil was not particularly fertile, but the technology needed to farm it has existed before medieval times. The sandy soil on the other hand was extremely difficult to farm as too much or too little rain could easily ruin the harvest. For this reason east of this line, Denmark was heavily agricultural while west of the line Denmark was more of a desert dominated by heath.

In 1070, Adam of Bremen wrote the following about Jutland:

The soil of Jutland is sterile; except for those places close to a river, nearly everything looks like a desert. It is a salt land and a vast wilderness. Furthermore, if Germany as a whole is frightful for its densely wooded highlands, Jutland itself is more frightful in other respects. The land is avoided because of the scarcity of crops, and the sea because it is infested by pirates. Hardly a cultivated spot is to be found anywhere, scarcely a place fit for human habitation. Sealand by contrast is celebrated as much for the bravery of its men as for the abundance of its crops... Scania is the province of Denmark fairest to look upon-whence also its name well provided with men, opulent of crops, rich of merchandise, and now full of churches.- Adam of Bremen

This glacial line ran right through the middle of Vejle and Skanderborg counties and roughly followed the Western border of Aarhus amt. The poor soil to the west cased the population to smaller, the parish boundaries bigger, and farms large in size but poor in production. Manorial production was less profitable. There were less estates here than other parts of the country and several of the existing ones were disbanded and sold their plots to their peasants who then became freeholders.

History

Jelling parish in Vejle amt was the original capital Denmark. Gorm the Old came to Jelling from "Nortmannia," disposed of the king and founded the Knytlinge line. He and his son Harald invested large amounts of resources developing and fortifying this part of Denmark before Harald's son Sweyn relocated the capital to Roskilde on Zealand around the year 1000. Gorm is buried under the Jelling church and outside it are two rune stones and a burial mound for him.

After the capital was moved out of the area, this part of Denmark developed in step with the rest of Denmark. Cities were developed in the middle ages linking this part of Denmark both to the

rest of the country and the outside world. The only city that did not develop naturally was Fredericia which was created on orders of Frederick III in 1649.

- 960: Harold Bluetooth unites all of Denmark from his throne at Jelling, Vejle
- 980-985: Ravning bridge is constructed.
- 1000: Sven Forkbeard moves the capital from Jelling to Roskilde.
- 1070: Adam of Bremen claims there are 150 churches on Jutland.
- 6 July 1176: Schandthorp (Skanderborg) is first mentioned.
- 13th Century: Horsens is given city rights.
- 1231: Horsnæs (Horsens) is first mentioned, Kaldyng (Kolding) is first mentioned.
- 1247: Horsens is plundered and burned.
- 1256: Vejle is first mentioned.
- 1321: Kolding's previous privileges are confirmed.
- 1327: Vejle is given privileges.
- 2 July 1441: Aarhus is given city rights.
- 28 October 1583: Skanderborg is first given privileges.
- 1649: Construction of Frederiksodde (Fredericia) first begins.
- 15 December 1650: Fredericia is first given privileges.
- 19 February 1662: The medieval len become amter. In this area the boundaries and names remain the same.
- 11 March 1682: Religious freedom is granted in Fredericia.
- 20 June 1760: Skanderborg finally becomes an official city.
- 21 June 1794: Koldinghus and Stjernholm are combined to make Vejle, Skanderborg a Silkeborg are combined to make Skanderborg. Havreballe and Åkær are combined to make Århus.
- 14 June 1799: Skanderborg was combined with Århus amt, Galten herred is transferred from Århus to Randers amt, Nim herred is transferred from Vejle to Skanderborg (Århus) amt.
- 13 June 1821: Hids herred is transferred from Århus to Viborg amt.
- 16 January 1822: Vråds herred is transferred from Ringkøbing to Skanderborg (Århus) amt.
- 1 July 1824: Skanderborg splits off from Århus amt again.
- 1 August 1867: Skanderborg amt is combined with Århus amt again.
- 22 September 1867: Nørre Tyrstrup herred is added to Vejle amt, parts of Ribe herred are added to Ribe amt.
- 1942: Skanderborg splits from Århus amt again.
- 1970: The amter are dissolved.

Church Records

- Nørre-Snedes & Ejstrup: Fires 1675 and after 11. Sept. 1866
- Bredstrup: The parish records disappeared in the war 1848-1850
- Skivholme & Skovby: Fires 9 Nov 1855 and 1889
- Grundfør & Spørring: A fire 17 April 1887

Unique Records

The 1700 Census of Males

There are two record collections that are mostly unique to this region. The first is the 1700 census of males. This was a tax list that recorded the names, ages, relationships, and residences of each male in the country and survives for the counties of Frederiksberg, Skanderborg, and Åkjær that existed 1660-1793. This resource is available in three volumes at the family history library. The call number is 948.9 x29h.

The 1762 Tax Census of Koldinghus Amt

The second unique source for this area is the 1762 tax census of Koldinghus amt. Starting in on 23 September 1762 and running for 50 years after that, the Danish state required each person above the age of 12 pay 1 rigsdaler annually collected in increments once a quarter. For most of the country, these tax lists provide little genealogical information. In Koldinghus amt, the initial tax lists name each head of household, state their residence, names the property owner, and has tally marks for children, servants, males, and females over the age of 12 in the home. The information available is comparable to the 1790 US Federal Census. This awesome resource is on FHL Film 386271.

Key Websites

Many native researchers have taken a special interest in this part of Denmark and have published abstracts of the available records on their private website. Use of these websites will greatly increase your speed and effectiveness of your research. Below is a list of the biggest of such websites and what they contain:

www.brejl.dk

- Abstracted probates for all the cities in Denmark
- Abstracted probates for all the clergy in Denmark
- Abstracted probates for many of the estates, hospitals, and schools
- Abstracted probates for the counties (amter)
- Abstracted probates for the herreder of Samsø, Tyrsting, and Vrads
- Abstracted probates for Skanderborg birk
- Abstracts of 6737 pre-1814 marriages for the herreder of Tyrsting, Vrads, Voer, Nim, Nørvang, and Tørrild
- Abstracted cadastral lists for the parishes of Grejs, Langskov, Sindbjerg, Uldum
- Abstracted Land lists for the estates of Aggersbøl, Brandbjerg, Donneruplund, Hvolgård, Låge, and Stougård
- Abstracted Military reserve lists for Hvolgård estate
- Abstracted court records for the herreder Nørvang, Tørrild, Tyrsting, Vrads
- Abstracted court records for Ribe city
- Abstracted court records for Vosnæsgård birk
- Standardized spelling of names making searches easier

If you are not using brejl.dk, you are not doing your research correctly!

<https://horsboel.dk/>

- Abstracted Farm histories for Grindsted parish
- Abstracted Fire insurance lists for Slavs herred 1782-1799
- Abstracted Index to fire insurance lists for Nørre Horne, Øster Horne, and Vester Horne
- Index to copyhold records for Nørholm estate 1738-1874

- Abstracted 1651 tithing list 1664, 1688, and 1844 cadastral lists for the parishes of Ansager, Grene, Grindsted, Hejnsvig, and Vorbasse
- Abstracted probates for Nørholm estate
- Abstracted parish records

<https://milloup.dk/>

- Abstracted parish records for Hvirring, Hornborg, and Tamdrup in Nim herred, Skanderborg
- Abstracted parish records for Gangsted, Nebel, and Vær in Nim herred, Skanderborg
- Abstracted parish records for Fruering and Vitved in Hjelmslev herred, Skanderborg
- Abstracted parish records for Føvling, Klovborg, Tyrsting, and Grædstrup, Linnerup, and Hammer in Vrads herred, Skanderborg
- Abstracted parish records for Uldum, Langskov, Grejs, and Sindbjerg in Nørvang, Vejle

In the 7 years I have used this site I have never figured out the correct way to get from the home page to the pages with church records. The church records are in two places:

https://www.milloup.dk/hvh/download/download_kb.htm

<https://www.milloup.dk/bf/>

Here is a page that has links to a great many abstracted church records all over Denmark.

<https://slaegt.dk/kilder/hvor-finder-du/online-kilder-sub/linksamling-kirkeboger-1630-19/>

Case Study

This case study will use some of these available websites to extend the ancestry of Maren Andersdatter (1749-1833) back 4 generations to her great grandmother born circa 1578. The steps and links are included so you can follow along or try this on your own.

1. Maren Andersdatter was baptized in 1749 in Tørring parish, Vrads herred, Skanderborg amt, Denmark and was the daughter of Anders Wistisen (Vistisen) in Plovstrup hamlet. Tørring has records starting in 1721 and these are available at <https://www.milloup.dk/bf/index.htm>. Find Maren's baptism.
2. Tørring parish is split into four sections 1721-1749, 1750-1769, 1770-1789, and 1790-1814. Do a ctr-F search for "Anders Wistisen" on each of the pages. How many other children did he have? How many wives did he have and who was the mother of Maren? Keep this tab open.

The parish records on milloup.dk show Maren's parents were Anders Wistisen born about 1701 and Karen Pedersdatter born about 1707. Since both were born before the church records begin, we will need other sources to continue the line.

3. Go to <https://brejl.dk/> and in the search bar type in "Anders Vistisen i Plovstrup." Two results should come up one called "Nørvang herreds skifteuddrag" (Nørvang districts probates) and one called "Vrads herred 1803 skifteuddrag" (Vrads herred 1803

probates). The later match is after our Anders died and is for his grandson by the same name. Click on Nørvang entry.

4. On the page called "Private godser i Nørvang herred" (Private estates in Nørvang district) again do a ctr-F search for "Anders Vistisen i Plovstrup." This should take you to probate 12 for Anne Nielsdatter dated 6 August 1730. What is Anne's relationship to Karen Pedersdatter and what other relatives are listed?

Anne Nielsdatter was the mother of Karen Pedersdatter. Her husband was Peder Madsen. Four other children are named and two guardians are named who may also be relatives.

5. Now go back to the Tørring records in milloup.dk. Notice a record naming Anne Nielsdatter is not present but there is a 1729 burial for the wife of "store Peder Madsen" (big Peder Madsen) Do a ctr-F search for Peder Madsen and notice that each entry is usually marked as being for either "store" or "lille," "gl" (old) or "ung" "Sr" or Jr" etc. There were two Peder Madsen's living in Tørring hamlet. The older one was usually called big, old, or senior while the younger was called small, young, or junior. It was this older Peder Madsen who was Anne's husband and Karen's father.
6. Return to brejl.dk and click on "Miscellanea" then click on "Matrikler og jordebøger Hvolgård," scroll down to see land lists for Stougård estate from 1663 to 1794. These name each head of household, lists the value of their land, and their annual rents. Careful analysis of these suggests that the older Peder Madsen took over the farm of a Mads Christensen Borgsmed around 1700 and was a farmer. The younger Peder Madsen was a cottager and only came on to the scene shortly before the parish records begin. The older Peder Madsen might have been a son of Mads Christensen or it could be a coincidence.
7. There are a few tax lists we need to use that unfortunately are not indexed on any website. However, I have put links to all of them on Tørring's wiki page. https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/T%C3%B8rring_Parish,_Skanderborg,_Denmark_Genealogy. Click on the family, consumption, and domestic servant tax lists for 1696-1700. These tax lists are unusually detailed. Each person above the age of 12 is named and their relationship to the head of household is provided. What do they say about Mads Christensen's family?
8. Most likely this is Peder Madsen the older in Mads' home, but it is possible this is Peder Madsen the younger. However, in this case it doesn't matter because they were full brothers. Look at their 1736 marriage on milloup.dk. It says they are given permission to marry even though they are 1st cousins. Further information on it is found here <https://www.kkermite.dk/jyske-reg-03.htm>.
9. Look at probates 61 and 67 at this link. [brejl.dk/norvang.html](https://www.brejl.dk/norvang.html).
10. The Hvolgård estate records suggests Mads Pedersen was the son of Peder Madsen the older and Anne Nielsdatter. <https://www.brejl.dk/matrikel.html>.

Mads Pedersen was a son of the older Peder Madsen and Anne Nielsdatter. Anne was a daughter of the younger Peder Madsen and Maren Andersdatter. The only way they could be first cousins is if the two Peder Madsen's were brothers. Both were sons of Mads Christensen. Notice in Anne's probate that she has two living sons named Peder Madsen. The same thing had happened in the earlier generation.

11. Finally at <https://brejl.dk/> do a search for "Mads Christensen i Tørring." One hit should come up "Vrads herred Tingbog." Click on it and use ctr-F to search for "Mads Christensen." Several interesting hits come up but of particular value is the 19 November 1673 entry. Who does it identify?

Mads Christensen had a brother named Jens Christensen and both were sons of Abelone Madsdatter in Fastrup. My best estimate is that Abelone was born about 1578.

Maren Andersdatter was born in 1749 and no one further back on her line has a birth record but by carefully using the available indexed records it is possible to extend her line four more generations and 143 years before the parish records begin.

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